

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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October 11, 1996

To: Delta Protection Commission

From: Margit Aramburu, Executive Director

Subject: "Coordination of Efforts to Promote the Conservation and Restoration of Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta In-Channel Islands"

Background:

The Commission's staff has been participating in the Delta regional subcommittee work group of the San Francisco Estuary Project that has been discussing methods of protecting and enhancing the Delta in-channel islands. The group has been meeting about every six weeks since a one day workshop was held in Stockton on February 23, 1996. The work group is voluntary and includes representatives from federal and state agencies, reclamation districts, consulting firms, universities, non-profit groups, recreational boating groups, and individuals.

Proposed Statement:

The group drafted a statement which has been circulated to key federal and state agencies for review and editing. There has been unofficial acceptance of the attached language as a starting place to build consensus on this issue. The "position" merely seeks public support for these remnant areas of Delta habitat and promotes cooperation of signatories in seeking solutions so that these unique landscape features can be saved.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission vote to become a signatory to the statement entitled "Coordination of Efforts to Promote the Conservation and Restoration of Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta In-Channel Islands."

Attachment

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COORDINATION OF EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA IN-CHANNEL ISLANDS

WHEREAS, natural Delta in-channel islands are an important fish and wildlife habitat resource, and provide habitat for many special status species;

WHEREAS, many Delta in-channel islands provide for other valuable functions such as recreational, aesthetic and levee protection benefits;

WHEREAS, many Delta in-channel islands are diminishing in both acreage and numbers at an unacceptably high rate;

WHEREAS, it appears that it is the unanimous desire of all interests that the Delta would benefit ecologically from the conservation and restoration of the in-channel islands;

WHEREAS, the geographic scope of this agreement has been set as the legal Delta;

WHEREAS, all interests acknowledge that there are other beneficial uses of the Delta, such as water conveyance and recreation, it is the desire of all interests that Delta in-channel islands be conserved and restored to acreage and sites that maximize their ecological benefits, while considering other beneficial uses;

THEREFORE, parties signatory to this agreement [may consist of agencies, non-governmental organizations, governmental bodies, individuals/landowners, and others] agree to work together to reach and implement the goal of halting the decline and degradation of, and working toward the restoration of Delta in-channel islands.

It is envisioned that this goal would be furthered by efforts to promote the following objectives:

- Identify conservation and restoration techniques appropriate to site conditions and resource needs;

- Identify sites/locales where objectives differ;

- Identify work windows (periods to minimize adverse impacts of restoration work activities);

- Identify concerns and strategies for surface elevation (relationship to sea-level) objectives;

- Identify vegetation objectives;

- Address mitigation concerns with respect to conservation/restoration activities, multiple resource value considerations, and the issue of projects serving as mitigation banks for other projects;

- Identify incentive strategies for voluntary implementation;

Identify means to improve regulatory and permitting processes to facilitate achievement of resource objectives;

Identify potential funding and in-lieu resources to maximize partnerships/collaboration, and;

Develop a tool such as a channel islands restoration and management manual supportive of the ecosystem functions.

This agreement is not in any way binding. Signatories may enter without constraint and remove themselves by a simple letter noting such to the San Francisco Estuary Project (SFEP). It is hoped those parties committed to collaborative efforts will participate appropriately.

SIGNATORIES

Signature over printed name/date.